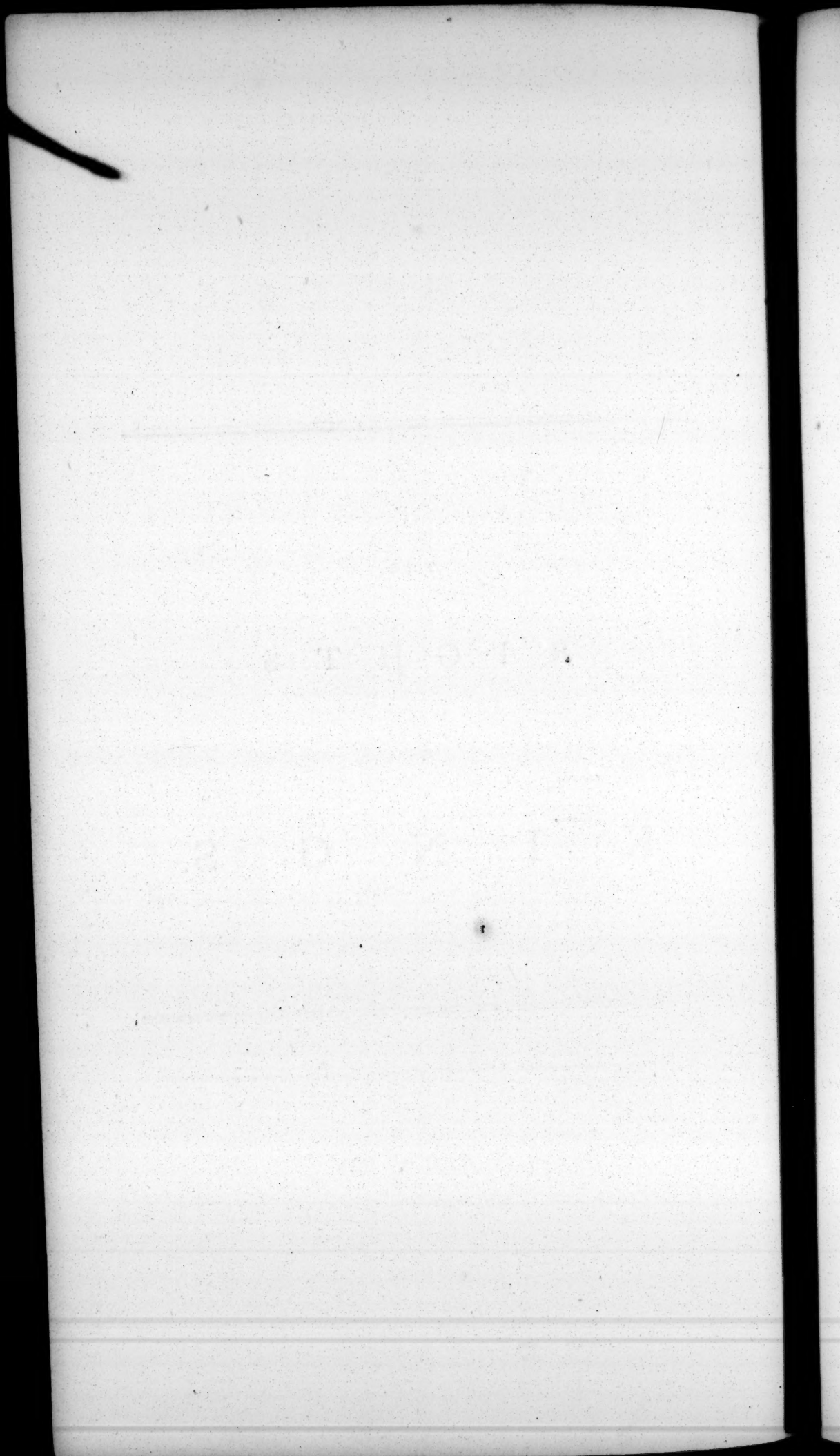


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THE  
R I G H T S  
OF  
K I N G S.

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THE  
RIGHTS  
OF  
KINGS.

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Τῶν τε πατέρων μὴ χεῖρες κατ' ἀμφοτέρω φαῖνται, οἳ, μετὰ  
πόνων καὶ οὐ παρ' ἄλλων δεξάμενοι κατέχου τε καὶ, προσέτι δια-  
σώσαντες παρεδосαν ἡμῖν αὐτά.

THUCYD.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE  
R I G H T S  
OF  
K I N G S,  
&c.

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THE attention of the world has been engaged for some time past by a work, equally conspicuous for the beauty of its style, and the dignity of its subject. And if erudition and eloquence constitute perfection, that work has attained it. The most splendid productions of genius, however, may be delusive ; they may shine without

solidity, and captivate the taste while they mislead the understanding.

This work sets out in praise of moderation : it condemns a love of change, and recommends a respect for government. So far we listen with reverence. When we come, however, to the motives of this respect ; when we arrive at the reasons upon which it is founded ; when we find that what is ancient is preferred to what is useful, prejudice to truth, and custom to liberty, we see where these principles would lead us ; that they would confirm equally the bad and the good, and must sometimes perpetuate tyranny, as well as maintain freedom.

With such beauty of style, with such energy of sentiment, were these doctrines enforced, that it would have been difficult

to

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to have combated them under the first impression of admiration. That admiration may have now subsided, and men may be capable of examining the subject coolly.

And if they do examine coolly, they will see that respect for government ought not to be founded upon prejudice: that prejudice is a blind guide; that it may embrace falsehood as well as truth, and defend a bad government with the same zeal that it would support a good one.

Probably, indeed, with a great deal more. Mankind are fond in proportion as they are foolish. How humbly did they adore the supremacy of Popes, how blindly admire the divinity of kings! equally enamoured of a monarch or a priest, a crown or a tiara!



When we review the history of mankind, the very name of prejudice excites indignation; prejudice has been equally the parent of their follies, and their crimes: it protected idols, sanctified human sacrifices, and enjoined persecution.

But is there no other base upon which to establish government? Is there no other principle by which to maintain it? Is it in vain that God has endowed man with reason, or is it on the noblest of subjects that he is forbidden to exercise it?

And what does reason teach us respecting government?

We can discover no ground upon which one man could originally claim a right to govern



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govern another.\* In the first stages of society there was neither government to give power, nor wealth to give consequence, nor rank to give honor. Upon what then could a claim to superiority be founded? Upon oppression alone, and oppression drove men to government.

It will be said, perhaps, that this is a fallacious system. It will be asked upon what ground we suppose that all were originally equal, and none entitled to govern?

Upon the ground of justice; because it would have been unjust that any should have been happy at the expence of the rest:

\* It may be supposed, indeed, that the world was parcelled out originally by the Author of all things, and a right conferred to govern, but this would be a *divine right*.

Upon

Upon the ground of equity ; because it would have been partial :

Upon the ground of humanity ; because it would have been cruel :

Upon the ground of common sense ; because it would have been absurd.

But if they will not allow this state of pure and natural freedom, let them advance with *divine right*. Let them proclaim, in the face of the world, that some man or men were destined by Providence to govern, and that the rest of mankind are bound to be miserable for their sakes.

We should conclude, from the language of some, that there never had been such a thing as natural freedom : that government was antecedent to liberty, and

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and we were obliged to the laws for all we possess. Now laws are comparatively nothing—the revolutions in the world have not happened from the violation of them, but from the invasion of natural freedom.

All then were at first equal ; government was contrived for general happiness, and power delegated for that end. From these premises it results :

1st. That the happiness of the people is the end of government :

2dly. That the forms of government are the means by which that happiness is to be attained.\*

\* They cannot be the ends, else there would be as many ends of government, as there have been forms of it in the world.



3dly. That all power is a trust.

If the happiness of the people be the end of government, its forms ought to be sacrificed to attain it, else the means are preferred to the end. And if power be a trust, whenever that power is abused, it ought to be recalled.

The people, then, of all countries have an inherent right to form their governments, and to depose and chuse their rulers. They may change the first as often as they are defective, and the last as often as they abuse their power.

Is it not strange that privileges which belong to all mankind should have been refused to the people of England? Is there any reason to make them an exception? But whatever be their claim in theory,  
they



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they have realized it in practice, and the first instance occurred at the Restoration.

When the people were tired of the Commonwealth, Monk marked their disposition, and commanded the Parliament to dissolve. They dallied. He then requested the secluded members to take their seats. They did the business. They wrote circular letters to the counties and corporations of England, desiring them to chuse Deputies for a Convention, and then dissolved themselves.

As the Convention was summoned without authority, it can only be considered as the people. Nor could the royalists have any other reason for calling it, as they formed a majority in the Long Parliament. They wanted the people to give Charles his title. And when the Houses did meet, they

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drew

drew up a proclamation, declaring, “that,  
“according to their duty and allegiance,  
“they did heartily, joyfully, and unani-  
“mously, acknowledge, and proclaim,  
“that immediately upon the decease of  
“King Charles, the imperial crown of  
“these realms did, by inherent birth-  
“right, and lawful and undoubted suc-  
“cession, descend, and come to his most  
“excellent Majesty Charles the Second,  
“as being lineally, justly, and lawfully,  
“next heir of the blood royal of this  
“realm; and thereunto they most hum-  
“bly and faithfully did submit, and  
“oblige themselves, their heirs, and  
“posterity for ever.\*

The

\* It will be said, perhaps, that the people in this instance only acknowledged a right. No matter what they did, they *did*, and they would not have been called upon to *do*, if they had been judged

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The next instance was the Revolution.

The tyranny of James II. was become intolerable to his subjects. At this crisis the Prince of Orange landed in England, with the design to procure them relief. When James saw the storm approaching, he was seized with a panic. On the night of the 12th of December, 1688, he threw the great seal into the river, sent the Queen to France, and fled from London.

There was now no government: no trace of a legislature remained. The King was fled, and Parliament had been dis-

judged of no authority. And here it may be observed, that every word of this proclamation would apply to the Pretender if he existed, and sanction his claim to the crown. What could oppose it but a subsequent act of the people?



solved some time before. The populace rose and committed some outrages. The Peers and Bishops who happened to be in London then interposed to save the nation. They directed the Mayor and Aldermen to keep the peace of the city ; they issued orders to the fleet, army, and garrisons, and they invited the Prince of Orange to London.

When the Prince arrived none knew what he was to do. The lawyers advised him to claim the crown by conquest, assume the title of Sovereign, and call a Parliament to ratify the act. This measure was rejected as violent. The Peers and Bishops then addressed him, praying him to assume the management of affairs for the present, and to summon a Convention by circular letters. Still William was averse to act.

An



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An expedient was then devised. Such persons as had sat in any Parliament of Charles II. (for the Parliaments of that reign were the last that had been elected freely) were invited to meet, and fifty of the common council of the city of London were added to them. This body voted the same address with the Peers and Bishops. William then agreed to act, and in consequence wrote circular letters to the counties and corporations of England, requesting them to chuse Deputies for a Convention.

Similar measures were pursued respecting Scotland. There were in London about thirty Peers, and eighty Gentlemen of that country. William called them together, and asked their advice. They prayed him to assume the administration for the present, as the Peers and Bishops had

had done. He consented, and summoned a Convention in Scotland.

The English Convention met shortly after. They came to a vote, “ That  
“ King James II. having endeavoured to  
“ subvert the constitution of the kingdom,  
“ by breaking the original contract be-  
“ tween King and People; and having,  
“ by the advice of jesuits, and other  
“ wicked persons, violated the fundamen-  
“ tal laws, and withdrawn himself out  
“ of the kingdom, has abdicated the go-  
“ vernment, and that the throne is  
“ thereby vacant.” They then settled  
the crown upon the Prince and Princess  
of Orange; the sole administration to be  
in the Prince, and annexed to the Settle-  
ment a Declaration of Rights, in which the  
liberties of the subject were clearly speci-  
fied and defined,

The

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The Scotch Convention copied their example, with the exception only, that they voted James had forfeited.

Such are the events that happened at the Revolution—let us now reason from them.

The first observation we make is, that all government ceased upon the departure of James. The Parliament consists of King, Lords, and Commons. The King was gone,\* and the Houses were no more. †

\* James had not abdicated. The term was only used in the excluding vote to cover the deposition. He wanted to reign, but they would not let him; that was the fact.

† There cannot be the least doubt that government was dissolved.—See the opinion of Hume on the subject: “By this temporary dissolution of government—  
“vern-



When government ceased, it dissolved into that from which it sprung, viz. the People. What else could act when government was at an end? What else did act? The Prince of Orange was nothing in England. The Peers and Bishops had no authority when they were not sitting in Parliament. Those who had been members in the time of Charles II. were so no longer. The Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, had no legislative power, and the Scotch nobility and gentry were as destitute of authority as the rest.

If we could hesitate to pronounce these persons the People, the mode in which

“ government the populace were now masters ; and  
“ there was no disorder which, during their pre-  
“ sent ferment, might not be dreaded from them.”  
vol. viii. p. 292.

they



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they acted would suffice to determine us. They proceeded with the utmost caution. When they prayed William to accept, they prayed him only for the present, the Convention were to determine the rest. Can there be a stronger evidence that they believed themselves the people? and does not the correspondence of the nations in their conduct quicken, if possible, the energy of the proof?

And if the persons who summoned the Convention were the people, the Convention itself could be no more. What then did they do? They deposed James because he had endeavoured “*to subvert the constitution of the kingdom, by breaking the original contract between King and People, and violated the fundamental laws.*” Their proceedings deserve notice.

D

The

The object of James II. was to establish popery in the British dominions : to this purpose he directed his efforts. He endeavoured to fill the offices of the State with papists, who were destined to promote his designs, and aid him in effecting the proposed Revolution,

In the attempt he met difficulties. The laws which excluded Roman Catholics from employment, threatened opposition. These obstacles, however, were only apparent. A dispensing power was a part of the prerogative, acknowledged by the statutes of the kingdom, and declared so paramount, that the legislature itself could not overcome it.\*

Let

\* A remarkable instance of this is related in Hume. " In the twenty-third of Henry the Sixth, a law of this kind (to restrict the power  
" of

Let us now recal the most flagrant acts of James's administration. He revived the Court of High Commission ; he  
impri-

“ of the Crown) was enacted, prohibiting any  
“ man to serve in a county as sheriff, above a  
“ year ; and a clause was inserted, by which the  
“ king was disabled from granting a dispensation.  
“ Plain reason might have taught that this law  
“ at least should have been exempted from the  
“ king's prerogative : but as the dispensing power  
“ still prevailed in other cases, it was soon able,  
“ aided by the servility of the courts of judicature,  
“ even to overpower this statute, which the legis-  
“ lature had evidently intended to secure against  
“ all violations. In the reign of Henry the  
“ Seventh, the case was brought to a trial, before  
“ all the judges in the Exchequer chamber ; and  
“ it was decreed, that notwithstanding the strict  
“ clause abovementioned, the king might dispense  
“ with the statute. He could, first it was al-  
“ ledged, dispense with the prohibitory clause,  
“ and then with the statute itself.” Hume's  
History of England, vol. viii. p. 238. Edit. of  
1767.—It will be said, that this decision was owing  
to the servility of the judges—Granted. We are



imprisoned the bishops who refused to appoint the indulgences to the papists to be read in churches ; he attempted to force the fellows of Magdalen College to elect a papist for their president ; and he suspended the laws against Roman Catholics. But these acts were all justified by his dispensing power. He might suspend the law which abolished the Court of High Commission, he might try the bishops by that Court, and he might dispense with the penal laws. These acts were certainly injurious to the people, and therefore they deposed him. But this only

only contending that the dispensing power was law, this would make it more. But even the Convention acknowledged the dispensing power in the very ardor of liberty, in the *Declaration of Rights*. They only condemned it so far "*as it had been assumed and exercised of late*"—that is, they did not like it—Will it be said, that James broke the laws now ?

only

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proves, that they were above the laws of the land, and acted upon those of nature.

The next observation we make is, that they chose the Prince of Orange. It was a choice, because the Prince of Wales was next heir, his legitimacy had been established,\* and William had no title to the crown.

\* As appears by the following extract from Hume :—" The report that a supposititious child  
" was to be imposed upon the nation, had been  
" widely spread, and greedily received, before the  
" birth of the Prince of Wales; but the King  
" who, without seeming to take notice of the  
" matter, might easily have quashed that ridiculous  
" rumour, had, from an ill-timed haughtiness,  
" totally neglected it. He disdained, he  
" said, to satisfy those who could believe him capable  
" of so base and villainous an action. Finding,  
" however, that the calumny gained ground,  
" and had made deep impression on his subjects,  
" he was now obliged to submit to the mortifying  
" task

crown. He had so little that the lawyers advised him to claim by conquest, that is, as an usurper. But supposing he had enjoyed the best of titles previous to the Revolution, to adopt him in the present moment must have been a choice. Were not the people free to act as they pleased? What power bound them?\*

The

“ task of ascertaining the reality of the birth.  
 “ Though no particular attention had been paid  
 “ before-hand to ensure proof, the evidence of  
 “ both the *Queen's pregnancy, and delivery, were*  
 “ *rendered indisputable*; and so much the more, as  
 “ no argument or proof of any importance, no-  
 “ thing but popular rumour and surmise could  
 “ be thrown into the opposite scale.” See vol.  
 viii. p. 291. And the people themselves believed  
 the legitimacy, as we find.—“ But when the  
 “ Prince of Wales was born, both the Prince (of  
 “ Orange) and the English nation were reduced  
 “ to despair, and saw no resource but in a confe-  
 “ deracy for their mutual interests. And thus the  
 “ event, which the King had long made the ob-  
 “ ject of his most ardent prayers, and from which  
 “ he



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The last feature in this business is, that they formed a government ; they defined privilege, they described prerogative ; they declared the rights of the subject, and made their preservation the condition of allegiance.

It is then manifest that the people of England deposed and chose their rulers, and formed a government at the Revolution. It is also manifest, that the laws of

“ he expected the firm establishment of his  
“ throne, proved the immediate cause of his ruin  
“ and downfall.” Vol. viii. p. 273.

\* What else could it be than a choice, since the old line of succession was ended. “ Thus ended  
“ at once, by this sudden and unexpected vacancy  
“ of the throne, the old line of succession ; which,  
“ from the conquest, had lasted six hundred years,  
“ and from the union of the heptarchy in King  
“ Egbert, almost nine hundred.”—See Black  
Com. vol. i. p. 210.

nature regulated their conduct through the whole transaction.

Mr. Hume defends the Stuarts upon this ground, that the odium excited by their administration was owing to the change of ideas respecting liberty, and not to their usurping new prerogatives. They exercised the old ones, however, in such a way, as to extinguish freedom. The ship-money of Charles would have annihilated property, and the dispensation of James subverted the religion of the kingdom.

But though the vindication of Mr. Hume does not justify the Stuarts, it establishes the principle we are now proving. It demonstrates that liberty is the criterion of government, and that the people will have it on any terms.

And

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And if our ancestors acted upon the laws of nature, they could not prevent others from copying their example : they could not refuse a licence which they took themselves, nor limit nature by Acts of Parliament. Why then shall we quote those of the Revolution ? Destitute of foundation, they must either disclaim authority ; or the ground upon which they stand must be open for ever.

And if it be idle to produce these acts at all, it is doubly so to argue from their expressions. The Whigs were obliged to humour the Tories, \* and they worded their acts to please them. This is the reason that they talk of “ *ancestors*,” after they had expelled ancestors ; this is the reason that they “ *submitted their pos-*

\* See Hume, vol. viii. p. 304.



“*terities*,”\* after they had refused to be submitted themselves. And so to submit their posterity was asserting *divine right*, for Heaven itself could do no more. Upon the same principle they might have sold us for slaves. But it will be said, they had no right to do that. The question then returns to the ground of justice; and whoever construes these acts by any other rule, makes liberty an estate, our ancestors the donors, and the laws they passed the conditions of inheritance.†

But is it not indecent even to name these expressions? Is it not arguing in the very teeth of our present establishment? Did

\* Expressions in the Acts of those times.

† However the Whigs may have been biaſſed by the Tories at the Revolution, some of these words are forms, and must be used upon such occasions.

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not the Convention that received Charles the Second *submit themselves, their heirs, and posterities for ever*, and yet we know best if we are governed by his descendants?

In considering these rights, it is chusing that is always objected to. As the English monarchy is hereditary, it is supposed by many, that the choice of the people interferes with the order of succession. But is this really the case? When we say that the people are to chuse their rulers, do we mean that they are to chuse their kings at the end of every reign? Certainly not. We mean that they chose originally, have chosen often, and may chuse again: that they chuse in emergencies — that when the public happiness renders it necessary to depose a king, they are entitled to chuse his successor;

and whoever denies this right, must deny the title of his present Majesty ; for all the reasoning in the world will never prove that after James was dethroned, the Prince of Wales was not the next heir to the crown.

Indeed to dispute the choice of the people, and to support Jacobite principles, is the same thing. Those who deny that choice, maintain divine right, though they do not mean it. We must recollect that there is no law for deposing a king—no statute authorizing a subject to take arms against his sovereign. When human laws, then, are at an end, must not he that claims, claim by divine ?

But are laws at an end ? Is government dissolved by deposition ? This is the great question, and it shall be discussed fairly.

We



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We have seen that there is no written law for deposing a king. Some, however, may think that there is an institute of nature, similar in operation, paramount in effect, but not extending to dissolve government. There can be no such law. The law that deposes a king, returns power to the people; not by command, but by consequence. If a sovereign of this country should so abuse his trust, as to render resistance necessary, the parliament must either side with the king, or with the people. If with the king, they become partners in the abuse; if with the people, part of themselves. In either case the whole power is resumed. Now this is the main point: if power reverts to the people, it can be subject to no limitations, no laws imposed when they last possessed it. This would be asserting  
that

that one parliament could bind another ; it would be constituting an equal superior. They are then omnipotent ; they possess the whole legislative, judicial, and executive power ; they can repeal, annul, abrogate\*—But what right—let us not confound our ideas ; we are thinking of government, and the right of that is the power of the people when they last possessed it.

But what is our difficulty ? Is it to believe that deposition is the act of the people ; or that, when it happens, power returns to them ? Will any one shew a law for deposing a king ? Will any one produce a statute for taking arms against

\* There can be no doubt of this ; all laws that then exist, exist by sufferance.

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the sovereign ?\* Is not the whole system of our present government the work of the Convention ?

Let us put a case : If James had invaded the kingdom before the Convention met—could the people have resisted him ? If they could, it is absurd to talk of laws, for James was then their lawful sovereign. If they could not, the Act of Settlement is greater than those who made it : for we resisted the descendants of the same James in 1715 and 1745 upon that act ; and that act was the work of William and the Convention ; and William and the Convention were the people.

But why should we reason about what they would have done ? we know what

\* They may, indeed, make war upon him in his own name like the Long Parliament.

they



they did. Did not they laugh at laws? Did not they fet them at defiance? Why did not they take the son of James, after his father was deposed, (our then lawful, and still lawful sovereign, if the people have no right) educate him in the principles of the Protestant faith, and fet him upon the throne? \* Why did not they? They did not chuse it.

Is it possible after this to deny the sovereignty of the people? Is it rational to dispute their right? Can there be the shadow of a doubt that their wishes are authority, their will law, and their actions government?

It is a notion with many that papists can alone be deposed; and that when they

\* The Prince of Wales was then only a twelve-month old.

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are deposed, it must be done under the Act of Settlement; hence they conclude that the crown devolves upon the next heir. The contrary is the case. All depositions happen under the law of nature—Liberty is the real test. If the catholic religion should become popular by a sudden change, a papist might govern unmolested; but if tyranny should break out in a new shape, the people would overturn the government.

But let us pursue laws—The Long Parliament were resolved to have law, and therefore they made war upon the king in his own name. The Revolution lawyers were resolved to have law, and therefore they counselled the Prince of Orange to make himself king, and then call a Parliament to appoint him. The Convention of 1688 were resolved to have law, and

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there-

therefore they first crowned William, and then made him give them authority to do it. Is it not absurd then to mention laws in such cases? Is it not ridiculous to oppose *hereditary succession* to the choice of the people? \*

When the prospect of issue from William disappeared, the crown was settled upon the descendants of James I. through

\* Hereditary succession is a form not an original principle of government. There is a great difference here. We can easily conceive the good of the people to be a principle, because it applies equally to all forms, and all are concerned in it; but we cannot imagine how men should be interested in the circumstance of a king succeeding his kindred, more than as it contributes to their happiness. For instance, if the people would always prefer merit, and never fight about the election of their kings, elective monarchies would be the best, and *hereditary succession* would be forgot. The *salus populi* however, or public good, would remain.

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the Princess Sophia of Brunswick. Hence some infer, that the right of such persons, existed antecedent to the statute. It could not be : power had reverted to the people upon the deposition of James II. ; and if the posterity of James I. were heirs already, it was needless to appoint them. As persons whom we once had known, they might hope a preference, and they obtained it. But what does that say ? Does a predilection in us prove a right in them, or an act of grace infer necessity ?

The last objection relates to the heirs themselves—they are pitied as suffering for the faults of others. It might be said, that if they had succeeded, they would have owed their crown to the merit of their ancestors, and they may forfeit as they would have acquired—That in all cases forfeiture extends to heirs—That if

this holds in matters of property, much more ought it in those of trust, where forfeiture is connected with the crime, and the thing forfeited is the thing abused—That if penalties are to be measured by the injury which the public suffers, they ought to be enormous here—But these are personal considerations, and touch not the real ground. The base of the argument is, that government is dissolved, that power has returned to the people, and that it exists for no one else.

It would appear that these rights have been denied for the purpose of condemning a late Revolution. Certain it is, that if they do not exist, every step which the French have taken is unjustifiable. If freedom must yield to custom, it was wrong to change ; and if the people cannot alter their government, they were wicked

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wicked in attempting a Revolution. But all this is absurd. The question then is, whether change was necessary.

The old government of France was a corruption of the feudal system. The king was supreme lord, and the nobles were his vassals. Subject themselves to the authority of the crown, they were in turn absolute over the people.\* They supported the monarch as their patron, and he protected them as the props of his power.

The consequences of this system were fatal to the liberty of the nation. The crown grew arbitrary, and the nobles tyrannical. Too proud to engage in the concerns of commerce, they sought the

\* By means of the *droits*, or territorial rights, attached to their domains.



church and the army. There the monarch aggrandized them : he gave them all the offices of the State—power, emolument, and trust centered in their hands.

In such a situation of things, what could become of the people ? Void of influence, stripped of rights, and destitute of protection, they were oppressed and despised—they sunk into nothing.

Will it then be affirmed, that change was unnecessary ? Will it be pretended that the people should have submitted for ever, and resigned themselves tamely to slavery ?

But it may be said, that the French went too great lengths, that they might have reformed their government without abolishing it. The remark might have  
some

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some appearance of justice, if the defects of their government had been curable. But this was not the case; abuse was universal: the whole body was infected; every limb required regeneration.

But granting that a reform was possible, would the people have been allowed to accomplish it? The nobility and clergy possessed all the influence of the State, they were inseparably attached to the crown, and the crown was rendered more formidable still by a hereditary revenue of five millions sterling—How was it possible to overcome such a force? How was it practicable to effect a reform to which such a power was adverse?

What then are the objections? The populace were guilty of excess—And are we to expect a revolution without it? The ques-

question is not whether excess was good, but whether it was worse than the evils of slavery.

But their system is defective ; many things might be mended. Let us contemplate our own government for a moment : if we count the years which its formation has cost, and reckon its faults, we shall, perhaps, abate in our demands of perfection.

To object to the French Revolution, then, is both foolish and cruel ;—foolish, because they were justified in what they did ; and cruel, because they abolished tyranny.

And the right which they exercised, belongs to all mankind. They have a constant, unalienable right, to form their govern-



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governments, and to depose and chuse their rulers. Public good is the supreme law\*—all considerations must yield to it.

And thence the absurdity of supposing an *original contract*. If we mean any thing by a contract, it is that, while one party abides, the other is bound by it. Now is this our sense of government? If the king of any country should possess too much power by its constitution, could not the people diminish it? Could the king urge that he had never broken his contract, and could not, therefore, lose any of his power? Could he oppose this language to the unanimous voice of the people? If he could not, there

\* *Salus populi suprema lex.*

is no contract, no bargain — the idea is ridiculous.\*

And the expression sprung from the Revolution. As our ancestors then used it, the lovers of liberty think that they talk orthodoxly when they follow their example. But it is really not so. If such a contract existed, no reform could take place, however necessary for the public good, however agreeable to the wishes of the people. Our rulers could always plead their contract. It was certainly intended that power should not be abused, and *original contract* may signify that

\* And Blackstone was of the same opinion:  
“ For, whenever a question arises between the so-  
“ ciety at large, and any magistrate vested with  
“ powers originally delegated by that society, it  
“ must be decided by the voice of the society it-  
“ self: there is not on earth any other tribunal to  
“ resort to.”—See Com. vol. i. p. 211.

inten-

intention ; if aught else, it is nonsense : and in the former sense our ancestors must have understood it, for James had violated no engagements. He was certainly a tyrant, and therefore deposed ; but *original contract* meant nothing farther.

It might be contended, that the people have a right to change their government, even if they are happy. What can hinder them, if unanimous ? This right is, however, abstract ; not because imaginary, but because it is improbable that an opportunity should offer of exercising it.

Necessity has generally been considered as the rule of resistance. When the misery of individuals becomes intolerable, it is presumed, that they may oppose their



governors.\* But how is it possible to lay down rules upon such a subject? As well might we make laws for the elements, or assign bounds to the ocean.

On such occasions the people must be left to their own feelings; nor have we any thing to apprehend from them. The multitude are naturally submissive, and the proof is, that they have borne so much oppression from their rulers.†

And yet to hear some men talk, we should suppose that the people breathed nothing but sedition; that they had nei-

\* Upon this principle Mr. Hampden resisted the officers sent by Charles to levy the ship-money.

† Witness their patience under the Neros, the Caligulas, the Caracallas, and all the other monsters that have disgraced humanity.

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ther sense nor moderation; that they were abandoned, like savages, to the dominion of the most furious passions, and that we must blind before we could tame them.

I wish the fault may not lie the other way: I wish they may not be too easy. It was the seventeenth century before they gave up *divine right*; before they could be persuaded that one man is not entitled to make millions miserable.

But that delusion is now past—our worst errors are now over. And as the first step to virtue is to leave vice, so the first sign of wisdom is to desert folly.—But I hope we shall not stop here—I hope we shall improve daily—I hope the time will come, when reason shall see, and sentiment shall feel, and unanimity shall  
pro-

proclaim, that public good is the end of  
fociety, public happiness the bond of  
government !

THE END.



VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT :

O R,

*T H E V I C T O R Y*

O F T H E

PLANTERS IN PARLIAMENT.

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